

LISTENING UNDER PRESSURE

**CONFLICT
MANAGEMENT**

ATTENTIVE LISTENING

KEEP DISTRACTIONS TO A MINIMUM

- ◆ Whenever possible and practical, prevent or ignore distractions.
- ◆ When distractions do occur, keep them appropriately short while remaining courteous to all concerned.
- ◆ It makes the speaker feel valued and important.
- ◆ It allows you to keep your attention on the speaker.
- ◆ It gives you a better opportunity to both understand and solve the problem.
- ◆ Remaining courteous to all allows others to see that your cutting short a conversation is not a reflection on them, but rather of the fact that the issue at hand requires your attention.

COMMUNICATE POSITIVE BODY LANGUAGE

- ◆ The way you sit or stand, hold your arms, gesture, or use facial expressions communicates as much or more than the actual words you say. It is important that people receive a message of courtesy and willingness to listen from all facets of your communication.
- ◆ It is possible to contradict your verbal message with your body language. Open, positive body language helps keep communication clear and adds to the speaker's feeling of value and importance.

MAINTAIN GOOD EYE CONTACT

- ◆ Good eye contact connects with a person's gestures and facial expressions as well as with his or her eyes. It focuses attention on the other person without becoming a stare.
- ◆ It makes the speaker feel valued and important.
- ◆ It makes it easier for you to hear and to understand the message.

PARTICIPATIVE LISTENING

MAKE AN HONEST ATTEMPT TO UNDERSTAND THE MESSAGE

- ◆ Concentrate on the relevant facts and don't let irrelevant details throw you off.
- ◆ The speaker feels you are really trying to get to the heart of the message.
- ◆ It makes the speaker feel valued and important.
- ◆ It gives a truer picture of the message.

RESTATE THE MESSAGE TO CLARIFY YOU'RE TALKING THE SAME LANGUAGE

- ◆ Rephrase the message in your own words the way you understood it, and give the speaker the opportunity to tell you if what you heard is what was intended. (This doesn't mean "parroting" back the person's words.)
- ◆ We all communicate from our own individual realm of experience. What one person means by a certain set of words and what another person means by the same set of words may be entirely different. By rephrasing what you hear, you give the speaker the opportunity to agree or disagree with the content as you received it.

ASK DIRECT AND SPECIFIC QUESTIONS TO CONFIRM YOUR UNDERSTANDING

- ◆ Ask questions with clear intent.
- ◆ Make questions as open ended as possible.
- ◆ Others, like you, don't like to be tricked. Saying what you mean and requesting specifically what you need makes the other person feel trusted, valued, and important.
- ◆ This allows unanticipated information to surface and shortens the way to finding a solution when problems arise.



OBJECTIVE LISTENING

DON'T JUMP TO CONCLUSIONS

- ◆ Listen to the complete message before you make a judgment
- ◆ You are more likely to gain information that could potentially solve the problem.

AVOID THREATENING QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS

- ◆ Be careful about saying things that imply that the other person lacks a certain knowledge or integrity. Care must be taken in delivering ultimatums.
- ◆ Threatening questions and statements make others defensive and difficult to deal with. They may make them feel worthless and unimportant.

KEEP AN OPEN MIND

- ◆ Try on the speaker's reasoning without the protective shield of your own biases and preconceptions.
- ◆ It makes the speaker feel valued and important.
- ◆ It helps you understand the other person's reasoning and to phrase your own response in a way that may be easier for him or her to understand.
- ◆ The speaker's explanation may lead to the solution of the problem.

EVALUATE THE MESSAGE, NOT THE SENDER

- ◆ Be careful not to let your own biases—likes and dislikes—about the speaker influence your judgment about the information he or she gives you.
- ◆ Fair solutions for both parties surface more quickly because you are more open to information that could potentially solve the problem.

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